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The Book of Numbers. By the REV. ROBERT A. WATSON, M.A., D.D.
New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son; Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co.
Pp. viii. + 414. Price \$1.50.

One of the most difficult things which the expositor is called upon to do, is to present a live, striking, interesting exposition of such a statistical book as Numbers. In the last series of the "Expositor's Bible" Dr. R. A. Watson, who has already issued "Judges and Ruth" and the "Book of Job," has made such an attempt. He has covered, in his exposition, the allotted number of pages given to the regular volumes of this series. His method differs somewhat from other writers in the series. He takes up a section of a chapter, or two or three chapters, and gives us an expository and homiletical treatise thereon, the two being intermingled on the same page. Occasionally, as in the parables of Balaam, we have a translation from the original Hebrew, but in most cases we have simply an exposition of the text mainly as presented in the revised version.

In the introduction, he makes some comparisons between Numbers and the Greek drama, between Numbers and the Iliad and Æneid. His discussions of the date and authorship of the book do not set the reader on solid rock. He is seemingly determined not to commit himself. The book is evidently a compilation and not a journal kept by Moses, but when or where it was put into final form he is not willing to state. The compiler was compelled to use the same sort of facts and methods as compilers today, and was probably as honest in performing his duty as modern writers. He states, however, that the ethical passages strike the highest note and are the chief power of this inspired writing. In some sections of the book we arrive more definitely at his thought. In his discussion of the report of the spies, chapter xi., we find that he holds that the narrative is made up of two layers. On the subject of tithes, chapter xv., he finds the usual discrepancy between Deuteronomy and the middle-pentateuchal books. His discussion also of Nazarism will strike the reader as unsatisfactory (p. 59). In a discussion of Kadesh-Barnea, on page 384, he quotes Keil and Palmer, but does not seem to know of the classic monograph issued by Dr. Henry Clay Trumbull. We find also occasionally a typographical error, but the most striking one is on page 230, where "Exodus" should be "Genesis." His discussion of Balaam is peculiar, in that he completely mixes up the expositional and the homiletical. To some students and scholars this is an aggravating arrangement. One sentence is expositional, the next homiletical and hortatory, and so on, confusing the matter in the mind of the reader. This volume will take its place by the side of his other volumes in the series, not striking or new, but being a good, ordinary homiletical treatise and practical application of the principles which underlie the events narrated in the Book of Numbers.

PRICE.